

and for the fabrication of musical instruments and touchwoods; but the major part is floated to the lower countries for timber and for fuel. Large quantities of the timber are sent annually to England and Hamburg for ship-building.

Rapacious animals, as bears, wolves, and lynxes, were formerly very abundant in the Böhmer-Wald, but have been exterminated. A bear, the last of its race, is supposed to be still haunting the Jokuswald, near Salnau.

The beds of peat or bituminous turf, locally denominated "Auen" or "Filze," may be considered in connexion with these old forests. The whole upper part of the Moldau Valley, as far up as the neighbourhood of Ferchenhaid, for an extent of 7 Austrian miles [= 32.998 English miles], and with an average breadth of  $\frac{1}{4}$  Austrian mile [= 1.178 English mile], is one continuous peat-bed, traversed by the windings of the Moldau, whose waters assume a brownish tint by dissolving the extractive substances of the peat.

In the mountainous parts the peat-deposits are more isolated, amid surrounding forests. The dense vegetation of pumilous birches and pines covering their surfaces attests their antiquity, and points to their analogy with the primitive forests. Lakes occur in the centre of the peat-beds near Innergefeld and Ferchenhaid. A swimming island, probably owing its origin to the central swelling and bursting of the peat, is seen in the last-named locality.

Cultivation is busy converting the peat-beds into forests, meadows, and arable-fields. These deposits, however, are of great importance in the economy of nature, and it may become a question of national economy how far this cultivation may proceed without injurious consequences. The climatal and meteorological influence of the peat-beds is the same as that of the forests; they even act with more energetic and concentrated effect. By acting as natural sponges in periods when water is abundant, they attract the superfluous humidity, and so prevent inundations. In seasons of drought they give up their accumulated waters. They are the real water-reservoirs in mountainous regions; generally giving rise to the rivulets and rivers, and keeping their water-level constant during every season.

#### OCCURRENCE OF *DIODONTA FRAGILIS* AT WEYMOUTH.

To the Editors of the *Annals of Natural History*.

Weymouth, October 23, 1855.

GENTLEMEN,—I beg to record Weymouth as a habitat for that very local Mollusk, *Diodonta fragilis*, having some short time since picked up a living specimen on the sands in front of the Esplanade. It measures  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inch in width, and is in excellent condition. I should have announced it before, but the fact was, it had been placed in a drawer with other shells to be examined, and I was not aware of the prize I possessed until it was pointed out by my friend Mr. H. Adams.

I have also lately taken alive, attached to a piece of *Eschara foliacea* by a *byssus*, a fine specimen of *Galeomma Turtoni*.

Mr. Coode has also dredged a specimen of *Tritonia* (? *Homborgii*). The following were my rough notes on its appearance:

"*Tritonia* (? *Homborgii*). A specimen 4 inches in length, taken by Mr. Coode and Mr. Stanley in fifteen fathoms water, off Lulworth. Colour marble-brown. Head-veil at times bilobed, at other times entire. The margin of veil not fimbriated, but closely set with tentacular points. Branchiæ in about a dozen tufts on each side of the back. Dorsal tentacles issuing from sheaths having their edges jagged. It appears to me to be intermediate between *T. Homborgii* and *T. plebeia*."

I am, Gentlemen, yours obediently,

WILLIAM THOMPSON.

*Description of a second species of the genus Procnias.*

By PHILIP LUTLEY SCLATER, M.A.

I have seen several examples of *Procnias* in collections from New Grenada, and have never doubted their being different from the Brazilian species. But being aware that a second member of the genus had been described by Dr. Cabanis in the Museum Heineanum under the appellation *Procnias Heinei*, I applied that name to these birds without much inquiry. Having lately, however, had the opportunity of examining the beautiful collection which contains the type of Dr. Cabanis' description, I find that I was in error in so doing. The specimen there designated *Procnias Heinei* is a female or young male of *Calliste atricapilla*, Lafr., and belongs therefore, according to my ideas, to a different family of birds.

I therefore propose the name *Procnias occidentalis* for this new species, which may be distinguished from the older one by its smaller size, the less amount of black on the throat, and by the white belly not extending nearly so high towards the breast.

**PROCNIAS OCCIDENTALIS, Sclater.** *P. læte viridis: fronte anguste et lateribus capitis cum mento gulaque nigris: ventre medio crissoque albis: lateribus nigro radiatis: alis caudaque intus nigricantibus.*

Long. tota 5·0; alæ 3·3; caudæ 2·9 poll. Angl.

*Hab.* in Nova Grenada.—*Proc. Zool. Soc.* Nov. 14, 1854.

*Descriptions of some New Species of Birds.*

By the Viscount Du BUS DE GISIGNIES.

1. *Lanius auritus*. *Mas.* *L. nigerrimus*, subtus nigro-fuliginosus; supercilio tenuissimo albo, pone oculos in penicillum auricularem rubro-igneum prolongato; humeris et tergo flavissimis; tectricibus alarum inferioribus, fasciculoque plumarum elongatarum axillari candidis. Rostro et pedibus nigris.